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VOL. 2, No. 1 BULLETIN OF THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF EVANGELICALS FOR UNITED ACTION JAN., 1943

"Modern Merry-Go-Round Or Rock"

Dr. Harold J. Ockenga

Text: "Their rock is not as our rock," Deut. 32:31.

I. Relativity the Modern Merry-go-round

It is said that there are only a few men in the whole world who understand Einstein's theory of relativity. I do not profess to be one of those men. If I were one of those men and should attempt to define relativity to you you probably would not understand it, but it is possible for us to illustrate the influence of the view of relativity as it affects our modern world.

In the physical world, relativity is a loss of a fixed center to the universe. Of course this began with the work of Copernicus who changed men's thinking concerning the physical universe in a radical way. Instead of considering the earth the center of the universe men discovered that the earth was an infinitesimal speck in an almost limitless space. Moreover, they realized that quantitatively man was simply nothing. The shock which this view or new thought produced on the minds of men was something similar to dizziness. For a long time they lost their sense of orientation. Life before this revolution of thought might be compared with a home made of four walls, the ceiling, with the hearth at the center. But Copernicus threw the ceiling out into infinite space and men became lost. It is impossible for us who have been brought up with the idea of Copernican astronomy to appreciate what an effect this theory had upon the minds of men who were brought up under the Ptolemaic system.

Einstein took this relativity in the physical world and applied it not only to astronomy but to the absolute and self-evident methods of measure.

Oswald Spengler took this same theory and enlarged it to apply unto history declaring that our judgments of history must be entirely relative and depend upon the perspective which we take of them. He also pushed the theory of relativity into the realm of truth and conscience.

Relativism has invaded the field of religion. There is no such thing as absolutism in religion any more. Every doctrine which has formerly been

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THE FEDERAL COUNCIL AND THE DEITY OF CHRIST

A Study Based Upon Published Statements Of Its Radio Voice

By J. Elwin Wright

Note: This is the second in a series of articles on this subject. The third will appear in the February issue. Copies of the December issue, in which the first article appeared, may be obtained at a cost of five cents each. Mail your order to the National Association of Evangelicals for United Action, 120 Tremont Street, Boston, Mass.

Constitutional Statement

I would like to return to a consideration of the one and only doctrinal statement of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America, which appears in the preamble of its constitution, adopted in 1908. Let us read it again. ". . . it seems fitting more fully to manifest the essential oneness of the Christian Churches of America in Jesus Christ as their divine Lord and Saviour. . ."

Effect of Statement?

It seems that the word "divine" was not included in the original draft and the suggested addition of this word brought on what is described as a "lively discussion." It was finally adopted unanimously. Mr. John A. Hutchinson comments, in his history of the Federal Council, "We Are Not Divided," that "the net practical effect of this addition has been the exclusion of Unitarians and other similar groups from the Council." (p. 37)

Indeed, the Unitarian denomination has never become a constituent member of the Council. However, the Council has had in its membership and continues to have men of Unitarian conviction. These men are among its officers, members of its commissions and committees, as well as at the forefront of its conferences, missions, and radio programs.

Introduction of Radio Voice

An outstanding example is Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick, who is continuously featured as a radio speaker under Federal Council auspices, and who certainly has the complete endorsement of that organization. I am not going to call into question Dr. Fosdick's

(Continued on page 4)

JANUARY CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

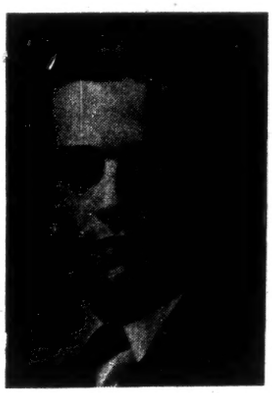
January	5	CHICAGO, ILL. Moody Memorial Church.
January	6-7	PEORIA, ILL. Auspices Ministers' Evangelistic Fellowship of Greater Peoria. Both evenings at 7:30 Majestic Theater. 10:00 a. m. and 2:00 p. m. on 7th at Y.W.C.A. Conference luncheon at Y at 12:30.
January	8	ST. LOUIS, MO. Y.M.C.A. 10:00 a. m. only. Luncheon at 12:15 same place.
January	9	DALLAS, TEXAS. Y.M.C.A., 9:00 a. m. only.
January	10	EL PASO, TEXAS. First Baptist Church 3:00 and 7:30 p. m.
January	12	PHOENIX, ARIZONA. Christian Center of Phoenix.
January	13	SAN DIEGO, CALIF. First Baptist Church 10:30 a. m., 2:00 and 7:30 p. m.
January	15-17	LOS ANGELES, CALIF. Trinity Methodist Church. Sessions: 10:00 a. m., 2:00 and 7:30 p. m. on the 15th, 3:00 on afternoon of 17th. Luncheon at 12:30 on the 15th at the church.
January	18-19	OAKLAND, CALIF. Melrose Baptist Church. Sessions: 7:30 p. m. on the 18th, 10:00 a. m., 2:00 and 7:30 p. m. on the 19th.
January	22	CEDAR RAPIDS, IOWA. Westminster Presbyterian Church. Sessions: 10:00 a. m., 2:00 and 7:30 p. m.

A Word About The President

(The first of a series of biographical sketches of United Action leaders)

Dr. Harold John Ockenga, the dynamic and youthful president of the National Association of Evangelicals for United Action, was born in Chicago, Illinois, and was educated in the public schools of that city. During his college days at Taylor University, he was known as a leader in social and spiritual activities of the campus. Upon his graduation from Taylor University, with the Bachelor of Arts degree, he entered Princeton Theological Seminary where he distinguished himself as winner of the Bateman Alexander New Testament Exegesis Contest. Later he entered Westminster Theological Seminary where he finished the regular Bachelor of Theology course.

Three years of graduate study at the University of Pittsburgh rounded out his academic training, bringing to him the degrees of Master of Arts and Doctor of Philosophy. During his graduate study at the University of Pittsburgh, Dr. Ockenga was ordained by the Presbytery of Pittsburgh, while serving as assistant minister of the First



Dr. H. J. Ockenga

Presbyterian Church of that city.

In the year 1931 he was called to the pulpit of the Point Breeze Presbyterian Church of Pittsburgh, which he served until he accepted the pastorate of historic Park Street Congregational Church in Boston.

During his six-year Boston ministry, Park Street Church has become known as the outstanding missionary and radio church of New England. Today it supports thirty-one missionaries and broadcasts all of its public worship services over Boston radio stations.

Dr. Ockenga has travelled extensively in Europe, the Near East, Arabia and North Africa, and has made a name for himself as a lecturer on social philosophy and as a Bible conference speaker. In 1937 Taylor University conferred upon him the honorary degree of Doctor of Divinity, and in 1939 Suffolk Law School of Boston honored him with the Doctor of Letters degree.

He is the author of "These Religious Affections," "Our Protestant Heritage," "Have You Met These Women" and "To Everyone That Believeth."

Dr. Ockenga's unusual ability, both as an administrator and scholarly minister of the Word, splendidly qualifies him to head this great national movement of evangelicals.

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New Office

At present all accounts are being handled by Miss Gertrude D. Clark, office manager and assistant treasurer. The new office is Room 521, 120 Tremont St., Boston, Mass.

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An Issue Of The Present Hour

The more important issue of the hour is not Fundamentalism versus Modernism, but the growing chasm between two schools of thought among those who undoubtedly have a firm belief, at least intellectually, in the great verities of the faith.

I say it is more important because nothing could please our common Enemy more than to have us dissipate our energies in fighting each other instead of combining in a common cause against him.

Therefore, although tempted to answer the misleading statements made in the attacks upon us, we will leave the matter with the Lord and let our actions be our answer.

WRONG VIEWPOINT

Militant fundamentalism has been in action for a generation. Justly or otherwise, it has attained a reputation for bitterness, rancor, carping, and ranting. One thing is sure. It has not won any major victories against modernism. It can point to few citadels taken. Not one denomination has been lost to the Federal Council during all the years of controversy. Few modernists have openly confessed their error and have returned to faith. Because of this fact, the radical group of fundamentalists have concluded that once a man becomes a modernist he is hopeless and there is no harm in "giving him the works." This group has more and more come to the position that all the established denominations are hopelessly apostate or that they have so compromised with error that there is no hope of a change.

WRONG ATTITUDE

Having this conviction, they see but one course to pursue—to form new denominations which will adopt a militant policy toward modernism and ALSO TOWARD ALL WHO DO NOT LEAVE THE ESTABLISHED DENOMINATIONS AND FOLLOW THEM IN THE ESTABLISHMENT OF NEW ONES.

HOPE OF THE HOUR

The other group of Bible-believing Christians, whom we will designate as evangelicals for the purpose of distinction, also see the grave danger of the present modernist movement. They realize that the denominations are spiritually sick because of modernist infection. But they do not believe that the situation with many of these denominations is yet hopeless. They remember that materialism, deism and other maladies have swept through the church in past generations and that through prayer God has been pleased to send revival and quicken the churches. They believe that God may do it again in this generation. In this hope they are uniting in a great movement throughout the country which, if the vision of its leaders does not become dim, will certainly center in evangelism of a more effective type, whatever else may be included in its program.

WAY TO VICTORY

We will be accused of being too optimistic regarding revival. It will be pointed out that many have waited through the years for a change for the better and no change has come. But I am convinced that we who profess to believe are greatly to be blamed. What has been our reaction to unspirituality in OUR churches? Have we let it become an occasion for deep heart searching, as we sought a new power for witnessing? Have we interceded in the privacy of our closets for our leaders? Have we sought a new infilling of the Holy Ghost that we might be used to rescue those who have lost faith? Have we yearned after the unbeliever and the apostate and sought to bring them back to God? Or have we let "righteous indignation" turn to cold anger, and criticism to bitterness in our denunciations, until we have lost our power to be of any assistance in bringing backslidden churches to Christ?

(Continued from page 1)

accepted as absolute is now being shaken and sifted as never before. Nothing at all is accepted on the basis of any authority.

When relativity takes its full fruitage in Christian civilization it cuts that civilization adrift. Western civilization then becomes a block cut loose from its moorings or its foundations. It may be thought of as a gigantic block afloat on the seas attacking China, India and Africa. The medicine, the schools, the orphanages, the humanitarianism of western civilization make a tremendous impress upon other cultures but because that civilization is cut loose from its moorings and foundations it becomes a menace rather than a benefit. The principles on which western civilization has been built, namely, the seed principles of apostolic Christianity have been repudiated and, in turn, the ideologies of competing systems are making their inroads upon us. In other words our great heritage has been dissipated. No one put this better than Saint-Exupery in his narrative of the Flight to Arras. This French aviator rebelling against the futility of his reconnaissance flight over Arras held by the Germans and full of danger, ready to give up his heritage, his country, his people, his principles and all, suddenly in the vast spaces thousands of feet above the earth, the tracer bullet shells exploding all around him, rediscovered himself and what he calls Man, which is none other than the universal Jesus Christ.

There is no doubt that the elements of disintegration and destruction are already at work in war, economic problems and social maladjustments. Man's last portion of faith, namely, the dogma which he himself created, his faith in success, in progress, and in world civilization has collapsed. For many only pessimism remains. The buoyancy of the Darwinian era of unending progress is gone. In its place men are filled with fear, confusion, dizziness of the merry-go-round. They have no point of reference. They are sucked into the maelstrom. They are lost like one who has lost the innocence of his childhood and tries in vain to regain it again. They turn in hopelessness to catch any straw which is offered to them whether it is the idealism of Communism or the dynamic of Nazism. They do not realize that they have lost the foundations of our culture.

II. The Rock

As long as only space and the material universe was drawn into relativity the spiritual point of rest was unshaken, but now the attempt is made to leave no point of stability and rest anywhere in the universe. Now it takes in conscience, truth, life and everything. Once relativity was a harmless mathematical and physical science. Now it becomes the deadliest poison of our day, no matter how it is dressed, as a morphology of history, as a philosophy, as an aesthetic or as a science. Anything which says one man may die for a principle in the first World War and I may give the last drop of my blood for an opposite principle in this World War and both of us be right is sheer madness and folly. It reduces all rationality to absurdity. If any one is to give the supreme sacrifice of life and blood it must be for a truth, for an abiding cause, for something which may be termed a rock. Am I right? Is there any other alternative? I submit that there is.

The alternative to the merry-go-round is the rock called God. When I speak of God I do not speak of the sentimental attitude and ideas that some have concerning God, a God of love, of mercy and of kindness alone. I speak of a God of righteousness. The fundamental attribute in the nature of God must be righteousness. Not the brotherhood of man, not democracy, not the rights of man, but right and wrong founded in the Being of God must be the foundation of all society and civilization. Without this we can never have peace or security or liberty or equality. If there is such a thing as liberty we must have liberty in something and if there is equality it must be in a general background. Men simply are not born equal as such. One is bright and one is ignorant or dull. One is strong and one is weak, but as men created by God we are equal in God and therefore whatever our physical condition, our mental development or our social position we acknowledge one another as equal before God and respect each other for what we are. It is for this conception of God, a God of righteousness that we may fight and die.

God also must be a God of truth. We take it that if there is such a thing as truth it is consistent everywhere. It is the same and it is discernible. They tell us that two and two may make four on earth and five in some other realm. If God is truth then wherever we find truth it is of God. Two and two will make four on earth and they will make four in heaven and if I discover truth in science, in nature, in philosophy, in biology or in theology, I know that in that degree I have discovered God for God is truth.

Likewise God is love, but when we speak of love it is a law of love, for God said, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart . . . and thy neighbor as thyself." This then is the fountain of all that is worth while in the world for love is the fulfilling of the law and it is not mere sentiment.

The second element of the rock is what I choose to call the kingdom, namely, that "righteousness, joy and peace in the Holy Ghost." This is the kingdom which can not be shaken.

ITEMS OF INTEREST

December 1. Another in the series of district rallies was held in the Christian Alliance Church, of which Rev. E. R. Rehm is pastor Rev. Ivar Sellevaag of the Christian Church of Portsmouth presided.

President Nathan R. Wood of Gordon College brought the opening address in the afternoon, giving a graphic history of the movement. The address was followed by an open forum directed by Rev. J. Elwin Wright.

The delegates, who came from many points in southern New Hampshire, enjoyed supper together at the church. In the evening the addresses were brought by Rev. J. Elwin Wright and President Harold J. Ockenga. The attendance and enthusiasm indicate the great interest which is being aroused throughout this area.

* * *

Portland, Maine, Organizes Evangelical Ministerial Association

December 14. Nearly a score of pastors of Portland and vicinity were present at a district meeting of the New England Conference of N. A. E. U. A. It was voted unanimously to form an Evangelical Ministerial Fellowship in the Portland area. Rev. Winthrop E. Robinson of the Baptist Church of South Portland was elected chairman.

At a public meeting following the minister's meeting a large gathering heard messages by Dr. Harold J. Ockenga and Rev. J. Elwin Wright.

* * *

Minneapolis, Minn., December 17. The Minnesota Committee, of which Dr. Paul S. Rees is the chairman, is laying plans for an extensive campaign of education throughout the state regarding the N. A. E. U. A. Every pastor is to be contacted and provided with information enabling his church to be represented at the Constitutional Convention in Chicago next April.

* * *

Tampa, Florida, December 20. A warm invitation has been extended to the National Association to hold its Florida West Coast Conference at the First Baptist Church in this city. Dr. Roland Q. Leavell is the pastor. The conference is set for March 15 and 16. Dr. Harold J. Ockenga, Dr. John Bradbury, Mr. Howard W. Ferrin and Rev. J. Elwin Wright will be in the conference party for the Florida Circuit.

* * *

Atlanta, Georgia, December 16. Plans are going forward for the Georgia State conference of the National Association. A strong committee is being organized under the leadership of Dr. K. O. White of the Kirkwood Baptist Church. The conference is set for March 10 and 11. All sessions will be at the Tabernacle Baptist Church of which Rev. Paul S. James is the pastor.

* * *

Lynchburg, Va., December 10. Dr. Graham Gilmer, pastor of the Rivermont Presbyterian Church of this city has accepted the chairmanship of the committee for this area, formed for the purpose of arranging N. A. E. U. A. conferences within the state. A conference for western Virginia has been arranged at his church for March 8 and at the Hotel Jefferson, Richmond, Va., for the Eastern section for March 25. In each instance the sessions will commence at 10:00 a. m. and continue throughout the day and evening.

* * *

Monroe, La., December 14. The First Baptist Church of which Dr. L. T. Hastings is the pastor will be hostess to a state conference of United Evangelical Action on Feb. 19. Dr. R. J. Bateman and Dr. Robert G. Lee of Memphis, Dr. T. Roland Philips of Baltimore and Rev. J. Elwin Wright will be the speakers.

* * *

Phoenix, Ariz., December 18. Rev. Homer W. Grimes, chairman of the conference committee for this city, has resigned as he is accepting a position with Moody Bible Institute. Rev. Harold A. Wilson of the First Baptist Church of Tempe has accepted the chairmanship. The Phoenix meeting will be held on January 12.

A Question Answered

The Executive Committee of the National Association of Evangelicals for United Action has been asked regarding its attitude to The American Council of Churches in two phases: (1) As to why the National Association does not recognize or affiliate with the American Council of Churches; (2) As to the National Association's attitude toward the Federal Council of Churches.

Answer

1. Those active in developing the National Association do not consider either the organization of The American Council of Churches or the personnel engaged in its promotion fit and proper media for the achievement of the desires and hopes of evangelicals.

2. Those active in developing the National Association do not believe in restricting the democratic action of the constitutional convention to be held in Chicago, April 27-30, for the purpose of framing suitable permanent rules and policies by making preliminary commitments. The policy of the present interested persons is that the National Association shall not be established on negative foundations but on positive doctrines and principles. These we hold will be a definite answer to the heresies in organization and truth which are peculiar to our times, whether as expressed through the Federal Council of Churches or any other media.

"I have read these documents (bulletin and booklet giving the object and purpose of the movement and also the doctrinal basis) with a great deal of interest and subscribe most heartily to your articles of faith, and I am thoroughly in accord therewith.

"I can certainly see the need of an organized movement such as that proposed and sponsored by your association. If you think I can be of any assistance to any of the conferences here in this state, I shall be glad to offer my services." **— Judge Homer C. Denton,** Atlanta.

OUR MAIL BOX

"I shall be happy to cooperate in the history-making movement that is being launched. I am in complete sympathy with it. It seems that it has been launched by the Holy Spirit for just such a time in which we live."—**H. A. Forester,** N. Car.

"I have been following with great interest and enthusiasm the Association of Evangelicals. Undoubtedly God is raising it up to supply a crying need."—**Robert B. Munger,** Calif.

"May I add my voice of approval to what must by now be a tremendous volume of acclamation, for the tone of the newly formed National Association of Evangelicals for United Action. It is encouraging to know that this Association is committed to a positive message of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and not to a denunciation of apostasy.—**T. E. Thompson,** Indiana.

"I am fully persuaded that this is the organization evangelical churches have needed for years."—**George French,** Minnesota.

"The book is tremendously effective. I do not think that any person could read the book without being aroused to the high privilege that this new movement offers in service. If a hundred men are secured here in Dallas as a committee, it should be arranged somehow for every one of them to read this book. It will guarantee their intelligent cooperation and that, in my mind, has been a great difficulty, that is, how we can introduce a subject of this character fully. The book is the answer to the problem."—**Dr. Lewis Sperry Chafer,** Texas.

"Have received the bulletin of the National Association of Evangelicals; also booklet of constitution and policy, and agree with same one hundred per cent. I can see the supernatural hand of God operating to bring together those who love Him and wait for His appearing. I believe that this Association of Evangelicals will be blest of God."—**Robert F. Jones,** Penna.

"I continue to rejoice in my heart because of the good start which we had Monday, October 19, in our church.

"I state that I am deeply interested in the Evangelicals for Action, and that is putting it mildly. I believe with all my heart that it is the time now to go on for some further development to receive some of the practical reaction that our general meeting, in Chicago next April may be more beneficial and we better qualified for decisions."—**Rev. B. T. Gabrielsen,** First Norwegian Lutheran Church, Seattle.

"We deeply appreciate this splendid movement, and add our prayers to thousands of others, that God's own blessing will continue to rest upon and cause this great work for the cause of evangelism to mightily prosper in the days of world crisis."—**Fox Evangelistic Party,** Naselle, Wash.

"How happy I should be to be actively associated with any committee headed by Dr. Ockenga and yourself. But I am nearing my 89th birthday, and for the past year and a half am very much of an invalid. I have been obliged to relinquish all active service, even to my beloved Bible classes." —**Augustus Bedlow Prichard,** Pasadena, Calif.

"Have received the bulletin of the National Association of Evangelicals; also booklet of constitution and policy, and agree with same one hundred per cent. I can see the supernatural hand of God operating to bring together those who love Him and wait for His appearing. I believe that this Association of Evangelicals will be blest of God."—**Robert F. Jones,** Penna.

"Through some of our brethren who attended the first meeting of the association I have been informed of its purposes, etc., and do believe it is a timely move.

"I believe there is a general interest in the organization throughout the country and this interest will steadily increase as the purposes of the organization become known." —**Ben Hardin,** Monterey Park, Calif.

III. Your Choice of The Rock or The Merry-go-round

Regardless of relativity you can not break the fundamental physical laws of this world with impunity. You may speak of gravitation being relative, but if you violate it you will be broken upon that law. No more can you violate the fundamental spiritual laws of this universe. We need to think and walk and live on a valid premise which derives its authority from itself and not from and through ourselves. It must exist apart from me, separated from my thinking, independent of my decision. Only as I have this valid premise, this fulcrum or foundation can I affect, influence or help the world. Without this the heart of my spiritual existence stands still. Without it, we may exist but we do not live, create or work. Whenever the premises of logic and morals have only a perspective significance there is no scientific cure for such a person. Nothing that we can utter or do will liberate such a one from the merry-go-round of thinking which unconsciously follows the circular movement of relativity which is an ever moving fire without interruption burning what is believed before and destroying what it builds.

Now you must choose. This is the hour when we must restore the idea of God, of a kingdom, of righteousness, of the soul; an hour when we must bring men to a regenerated experience, or an hour when we must lose everything which has been willed to us in the heritage of the centuries. If you want the rock, come with me to Calvary. There you will find a perspective with which to view the universe both in moral judgment, in progress and in purpose. There you will find a fulcrum by which to move the universe in progress. There you will find a cleft in which to hide in the midst of the terrible upheavals of our day. That is the center point of history. It is the division of time. It is the tangent from which the eternal touches the temporal. It is the point from which we know right and wrong, good and evil, eternity and time. On Calvary we know that our prayers are not simply a merry-go-round, but that they can affect things in the universe. On Calvary we know that life is essentially spiritual and from Calvary we know how to make a change in our fellow men.

Then if we would find the rock there is only one place for us to go. That is back to God through Christ.

No, America was not founded upon the Washington Merry-Go-Round or the philosophic merry-go-round. It was founded upon the belief in God. Our fathers said, "In God we trust." Like Moses they could say, "Their rock is not as our rock." It is time for us to turn again to this rock individually and collectively. This is the hour to acknowledge the God of our fathers. Thus we will be able to sing,

"Our fathers' God to Thee
Author of liberty
To Thee we sing.
Long may our land be bright
With freedom's holy light.
Protect us by Thy might
Great God, our King."

(Continued from page 1)

sincerity, as many have done. I have earnestly endeavored to find out just what he really believes because it so evidently represents that for which the Federal Council stands. In the absence of a comprehensive doctrinal statement, as I pointed out in my previous article, it seems fair to assume that the uncontradicted statements on doctrinal matters made by its most prominent leaders reveals its position.

Emptiness of Words

Does Dr. Fosdick believe in the divinity of Christ? That good word "divinity" is one of the terms which modernists have so continually used with changed meaning that fundamentalists have recently discarded it in favor of the word "deity," which has seemed to be less liable to perversion. Dr. Fosdick recognizes no difference in the meaning of the words "divinity" and "deity." He uses them interchangeably. When he says "divinity" he means "deity" and vice versa. Then he proceeds to nullify the definition of these words which were universally accepted by the Church until the rise of modernism. He states that "the Divinity of Jesus is primarily an affirmation about God . . . . Isaac Newton looked at the fallen apple in the orchard until he overpassed looking at it and looked through it into a universal law . . . Those first disciples looked at Jesus until they overpassed looking at him into a revelation of something eternally true about God." ("Living Under Tension," pages 152-153.)

Denial of Deity

But Dr. Fosdick makes it clear that he believes that Jesus was in no sense "divine" or "deity" except as any of us may be. "God can come into human life because God has come into human life (in Jesus). At its best, that is what the church has always meant by the divinity of Jesus. Do not, I beg of you, tie this great affirmation up with miraculous accompaniments, such as the virgin birth . . . as you know, I cannot believe it." ("Ibid," p. 157.)

Denial of Miracles

"We moderns have lost faith in miracles, and if by miracles we mean occurrences involving the breaking of nature's laws, we are right, for nature's laws are God's and are never broken." ("Ibid," p. 222.)

Denial of Atonement

It is also clear that Dr. Fosdick believes that Jesus died for a great principle rather than as an atoning sacrifice. He says, "When a capacious soul comes, standing for something that he cares so much about he will die for it on Calvary, you cannot flatter him. He has identified himself with something greater than himself, of which he regards himself as the incarnation and instrument. He thinks of himself as the vehicle and agent of an eternal matter. He does not want his ego idolized: he wants his cause supported." ("The Hope of the World," p. 98.)

"The world has tried in two ways to get rid of Jesus: first, by crucifying him, and second by worshiping him. . . . If at first this seems a dangerous thing to say, remember that Jesus himself said it. He did not fear being opposed. He knew that the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church, and concerning his own cross John reports his saying: 'I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto myself.' He did not fear being opposed; he feared being worshiped." ("Ibid," p. 96.)

False Definition of Deity

"I can imagine some one saying, But, then, do you not believe in the divinity of Jesus? To which I answer that I believe in the divinity of Jesus with all my faculties if we can come to an understanding about what we mean by divinity. Are you willing to start with John's idea of divinity in the New Testament: 'God is love'? That is divinity—love. Divinity is not something supernatural that ever and again invades the natural order in a crashing miracle. Divinity is love. Here and now it shines through the highest spiritual experiences we know. Wherever goodness, beauty, truth, love are—there is the Divine. And the divinity of Jesus is the divinity of his spiritual life.

"If some one says, Well, we all have some of that divine spark in us; we all have some goodness, truth, love, and therefore on that basis the divinity of Jesus differs from ours in degree, indeed, but not in kind, I answer, Are you afraid of that conclusion? Of course, the divinity of Jesus differs from ours in degree but not in kind." (Ibid," p. 103.)

And so we have, in Fosdickian theology, a Christ who was normally born, whose miracles are myths, who was humanity at its best, who died for His convictions on a cross and whose dust is still in an unknown Syrian grave.

Reason for Divinity Statement

We do not wish to be irascible about this, but it seems to us that the chief value of the "divinity" statement in the preamble of the Council constitution is that it may be pointed to as proof (when it is needed to convince reluctant evangelicals) that the Council is a Simon-pure orthodox organization. It does bar some honest Unitarians who are not willing to re-define "deity" or "divinity," but it covers a multitude of sins with the liberals who are ready to agree to anything which will permit them to dominate evangelical groups by the process of infiltration.

Deceitfulness of Words

In talking with a friend recently, the subject of Dr. Fosdick's alleged heterodoxy came up. He contended that Dr. Fosdick is as much an evangelical as anyone could desire and offered this proof: Said he, "I recently showed a friend of mine, who is an ardent fundamentalist, a series of quotations from a certain clergyman and asked him whether he thought the person quoted was a modernist or a fundamentalist. He said, 'Unquestionably, he is a fundamentalist.' I was quoting from Dr. Fosdick."

I had this in mind in my recent extensive reading of Dr. Fosdick's sermons. I am convinced that it would be entirely possible to compile a series of statements from these sermons which would persuade the average layman that Dr. Fosdick is an evangelical. But to the more discerning, the most favorable compilation of these statements would leave room for doubt because of certain areas of theology which he leaves severely alone. One may hunt in vain for any reference to the need of a blood atonment for sin, or regeneration as a requirement for becoming a child of God.

But other references are found frequently which, while they may not be made with any intent to deceive, certainly give the average reader reason to think that Dr. Fosdick believes the things which actually he does not believe at all.

For instance, Dr. Fosdick speaks repeatedly of "the God of all mankind revealed in Christ" ("Life Under Tension" p.218). That statement certainly belongs to the strictest form of orthodoxy. It speaks to us of the miraculous birth, the unique Sonship, the two natures, human and divine, which were His in equal measure. But Dr. Fosdick very evidently means something entirely different. He repudiates every phrase of this interpretation. To him, Christ is the supreme example of what human nature may be if indwelt by God. That, and nothing more. As such he would "exalt him" ("Ibid", p. 160) and "adore him" ("Adventurous Religion," p. 323). but would regard it as dangerous to worship him. We quote him again to make his position clear: "Yet the God who was in Jesus is the same God who is in us; you cannot have one God and two kinds of divinity. It was one of the supreme days in man's spiritual history when human nature in Jesus was carried out from the dark into the light and men saw as never before what could happen to it when the divine life was released through it." ("Living Under Tension," p. 160.) "If Jesus is divine and if divinity is in each of us, like the vital forces which in winter wait in the frozen ground until the spring comes, that is a gospel!" ("Ibid," p. 159.)

Unveiled Belief

If Dr. Fosdick's premise in regard to the humanity of Jesus is correct, his thesis is also sound and Jesus is debased eternally to our level. It would be at least a theoretical possibility for any other human being to be equal to or to surpass Jesus in His perfections. Therefore, we do not need a Saviour. We need only to emulate Jesus in consecration to God and service to our fellow men to be every whit as much deity as He. Divinity, according to this theology, is resident from birth in every son of Adam,—in Pilate, in Judas, in Adolf Hitler, in Mussolini, in Joseph Stalin. All they or we need to do is to fan the ember into flame.

That another character with superlative qualities will come Dr. Fosdick is convinced. His reference to the coming of a "decisive messiah" is food for thought. We quote from "Living Under Tension," p. 228: "Some day, I predict, a man will rise by whose hands a federation of the world will be (so) effected, and wars (so) stopped thereby, that his name will go down across the centuries associated with that great achievement, as Copernicus' name is with the new astronomy, or Lincoln's with the preservation of our union. That man will come. Some day he will arise. For all we know he may be lying this morning in some unknown village in his crib. But when he comes, what will it take to make him decisive? Multitudes of us who have gone before, who have believed in peace when belief was difficult, prophetic spirits undaunted by man's brutality, hungry souls wanting peace, wise souls seeing war's futility, courageous souls with faith in brotherhood's possibility—a multitude of plain people must prepare the way before the decisive messiah can come with peace in his hands. All of us do matter; personality even in us does count."

Christian Attitude

Dr. Fosdick has been the subject of many attacks during the past two decades, and he has undoubtedly deserved them, as he has become a "front" for the liberals of America. But a great difficulty with fundamentalists is that they have been too much concerned with what the case deserves and too little concerned with what the case needs. A friend of mine, an aged clergyman, told me recently that Dr. Fosdick is on his daily prayer list. He believes that God may yet cause him to see his error and return to the faith from which he has departed. How greatly he and others might be used of God to bring about a nation-wide revival if they would come to see the folly of their apostasy and return to the Book and the Message. Could we not all join in the daily prayer of my friend?

Fosdick's Logic Typical

We have followed Dr. Fosdick's logic rather closely, not to make him an object of attack for his beliefs, but as an example of the accepted pattern of the thinking of the liberals of our day, which finds its avenue of expression in the Federal Council.

That Dr. Fosdick's views are usual rather than exceptional among those most prominent in the Council is evident from their writings.

Rise of World Council

But now there appears, in addition to the Federal Council, a world movement having similar character and objectives. It will be well to note briefly its position doctrinally.

This recently organized World Council of Churches, which took form at the Conference of Utrecht, adopted a doctrinal position concerning the deity of Christ which would seem to be proof against perversion. It describes the organization as "a fellowship of churches which accept the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour." What words in the English language could be stronger? Here at last, surely, we have an organization irrevocably committed to the doctrine which is the most central in Christianity. But I wonder if it is as inviolable as it seems. There are two reasons for my doubt. The first is the final phrase of the statement itself: ". . . leaving it to each denomination to decide how much content shall be put into these words." This seems to us to be saying, "We realize that this is strong language, but do not let it frighten you. Its purpose is to satisfy the evangelicals but (on the side) you can re-define the statement to suit yourselves."

My second doubt arises from the well-known doctrinal position of many of the leaders who have been actively engaged in promoting the World Council. How they can be "intellectually honest," a term which modernists are fond of employing in affirming their belief that Jesus Christ is God and Saviour in one breath, while denying His deity in the next, is difficult for us to see. It seems to us that this closing phrase of the declaration is trying to assure the liberals who are in the World Council that they are not expected to take the statement seriously.

N. A. E. U. A. a Necessity!

We do not wish to be harsh in our judgment. We do not wish to be unkind or ill-tempered in our approach to the matter of modernism in the Federal Council and other interchurch groups. But we wish to put this matter of the deity of our Lord and the modernist position regarding it out on the table for public inspection. Here, on this most important doctrine of the Christian faith, is the position of the Federal Council. It is in direct opposition to that for which the National Association of Evangelicals stands regarding the person and work of Christ. The Federal Council, because of its unfaithfulness to Christ in doctrine, cannot represent the millions of evangelicals who have been without adequate representation until this National Association of Evangelicals began to take form.